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San Manuel Public Safety officer extracts victim from burning crash

Staff Writer, Highland Community News

Posted: May 21, 2020



San Manuel Department of Public Safety Officer Joseph Morris

Photo courtesy of San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

At 9:28 p.m. on Sunday, May 10, San Manuel Department of Public Safety Officer Joseph Morris unexpectedly assisted an unconscious passenger out of a totaled, burning vehicle.

Morris was traveling southbound on Tippecanoe Avenue when he observed what appeared to be a burning vehicle in the middle of the northbound lane, just north of Harry Sheppard Boulevard, when the San Manuel security officer decided to provide aid.

“The actions of PSO Morris demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the protection and safety of others,” said San Manuel Chief Physical Security Officer Steven Gomez. “This is a priority that all the 400-plus members of our department share with the tribe that we serve.”

Morris turned on his amber hazard lights as he exited his vehicle and was met with calls for assistance from bystanders. He approached the damaged vehicle and found an unresponsive male lying across the passenger and driver seat. Morris had to pop the airbag in an attempt to get inside the vehicle. He was unable to get to the injured passenger, however, and entered the vehicle through the backseat, released the passenger’s seat belt and extracted him from the vehicle. With the assistance of a Stater Bros. corporate security officer, Morris was able to carry the passenger a safe distance from the burning vehicle, where he awaited medical assistance.

While providing support to the passenger, Morris noticed the driver of the vehicle was not inside or anywhere in his sight. He turned on his flashlight, searched the area and found another male victim lying unconscious and unresponsive, about 20 feet away on the center median that was full of debris. Morris cleared the debris surrounding the driver before San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, San Bernardino Police Department, **San Bernardino County Fire** and AMR arrived on scene five minutes later.

“The heroic effort and actions of Mr. Morris is admirable. The vital information he and others on scene relayed to dispatch provided first responders critical information,” stated San Bernardino County Fire Capt. Mike Arvizo. “Thank you for your valiant efforts.”

Both subjects, Felipe Villalobos Barba, 36, and Oscar Villalobos, 26 were unresponsive when first responders arrived to the scene and later succumbed to their injuries.

According to a sheriff's department press release, speed and alcohol were believed to be contributing factors to the single-vehicle crash.

https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/san-manuel-public-safety-officer-extracts-victim-from-burning-crash/article_5fae2afa-9bae-11ea-8c54-df5e4800411a.html

Aztec Falls and surrounding areas of Deep Creek to temporarily close this Friday

Staff Writer, San Bernardino National Forest news release / Victor Valley News Group

Posted: May 21, 2020



(Photo courtesy of San Bernardino National Forest//Twitter)

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — Due to unsustainable overcrowding, officials with San Bernardino National Forest this Friday (May 22) will implement a closure of Deep Creek for an approximately 2.5-mile stretch in the Lake Arrowhead area.

The popularity of the creek’s swimming holes, most notably at Aztec Falls, over the past several years has created a growing traffic and parking problem on the narrow Forest Service roads leading to the creek. “The crowds at Aztec Falls and nearby swimming holes have reached a tipping point,” said Mountaintop District Ranger Marc Stamer. “We need to take a pause for the safety of everyone and protection of the river so we can come up with a plan for visitors to sustainably recreate.”

Case in point, two weeks ago on Saturday, May 9, visitation grew to the point where parking spilled a half mile outside the National Forest border, creating a two mile road hike to the Splinters Cabin Trailhead, which accesses the creek. The hike to the nearest point on the creek is normally a tenth of a mile from the Splinters Cabin parking lot (Aztec Falls from the parking lot is approximately one half mile).

That same day, **San Bernardino County Fire** and Sheriff’s Department units responding to a 911 call for an injury in the creek could not access the area. Parking along the single lane Forest Service roads created gridlock where vehicles had no room to pull over to let oncoming ones pass. To reach the injured visitor, the operation turned into an air rescue.

The next week, on Saturday, May 16, similar levels of visitation were reached, creating more gridlock on the Forest Service roads. San Bernardino County Fire could not get a type 3 engine into the area for general patrol and a California Highway Patrol unit became stuck in traffic for a few hours. San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department units were prompted closed the road for a few hours to relieve the congestion.

During the closure, Forest staff will work toward creating a recreation management plan for the area to address congestion and parking, as well as other challenges in managing this section of Deep Creek, including illegal campfires, graffiti and trash.

- The Forest Order closing the area is set for one year and may be lifted early or expanded.
- The closure covers the creek going north from Splinters Cabin Trailhead to Devils Hole.
- The picnic area and Splinters Cabin Road (Forest Road No. 3N34D) will also be closed to vehicles and foot traffic.
- Thru-hiking the area on the Pacific Crest Trail will be allowed, however, starting the trail from Splinters Cabin will not be allowed at this time.

A violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

<https://www.vvng.com/aztec-falls-and-surrounding-areas-of-deep-creek-to-temporarily-close-this-friday/>

Overcrowding closes swimming holes near Lake Arrowhead

JESSICA KEATING, Redlands Daily Facts / The Sun / SCNG

Posted: May 21, 2020, 12:51 p.m.

Popular swimming holes northwest of Lake Arrowhead will be closed up to a year beginning Friday, May 22, the San Bernardino National Forest announced.

In a news release Thursday, forest officials said “unsustainable overcrowding” in the area is forcing a closure at Deep Creek for about 2.5 miles near Lake Arrowhead. The popularity of the creek’s swimming holes, most notably at Aztec Falls, are causing traffic and parking problems on the narrow roads in the area, forest officials said.

“The crowds at Aztec Falls and nearby swimming holes have reached a tipping point,” Mountaintop District Ranger Marc Stamer said, according to the news release. “We need to take a pause for the safety of everyone and protection of the river so we can come up with a plan for visitors to sustainably recreate.”

Recent traffic and parking problems meant that **San Bernardino County fire** and sheriff’s personnel could not access the area on May 9, when they were called to respond to an injury in the creek, forest officials said. The operation turned into an air rescue.

The following week, crowds were again so heavy that county fire was unable to patrol the area and a California Highway Patrol unit got stuck in traffic, officials said.

The closure, which covers the Deer Creek going north from Splinters Cabin Trailhead to Devils Hole, is set to expire in May 2021. The picnic area and Splinters Cabin Road will be closed, and those hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail may not start out from Splinters Cabin Road.

The closure may be lifted early or expanded, forest officials said. Violators face fines up to \$10,000 and/or six months in jail.

During the closure, forest staff are expected to develop strategies to relieve congestion and parking, and tackle issues such as illegal campfires, graffiti and trash.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2020/05/21/overcrowding-closes-swimming-holes-near-lake-arrowhead/>

TWO MORE SUSPICIOUS FIRES IN WONDER VALLEY; THAT MAKES 7 IN ONE MONTH

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: May 22, 2020



The vacant house in the 3800 block of Shadow Mountain Road was fully involved in flames when firefighters arrived. San Bernardino County photo

The Wonder Valley firebug was back last night. County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said firefighters were called to two fires in Wonder Valley; the first call came in at 11:52 p.m. to a vacant, dilapidated house near Valle Vista and Bullion Mountain Road. Twentynine Palms firefighters confined the fire to the bedroom where it had started, and the blaze was out by the time the Combat Center fire crew arrived to assist.

As fire crews were hauling in the hoses, a second fire call came in at 12:50 a.m. in the 3800 block of Shadow Mountain Road. A vacant house was fully involved in flames when crews arrived; it was a total loss.

Both fires are under investigation by county fire and the Sheriff's Arson and Bomb unit. These are the sixth and seventh suspicious fires in the Wonder Valley/Twentynine Palms area in one month, all in the late night or early morning hours.

<http://z1077fm.com/two-more-suspicious-fires-in-wonder-valley-that-makes-7-in-one-month/>